İnönü Wars and True Heroes with All Clarity

Cevat Rıfat Atilhan

BERSERKER
BOOKS

CEVAD RIFAT ATİLHAN

IN ALL ITS CLEARNESS

THE INÖNÜ BATTLES

AND

THE TRUE HEROES

BIOGRAPHY

Cevat Rifât Atilhan was born in 1892 (1308) in Vefâ. His father, Hasan Rıfat Pasha, was the mutasarrıf of Damascus. His grandfather, Hurşit Pasha, was the bey of Bosnia-Herzegovina. Cevat Rifât Atilhan graduated from the Military Academy in 1912 and first took part in the Albanian campaign. He subsequently took part in the First and Second Balkan Wars, and the Siege of Edirne, 'where he was taken prisoner during the Siege of Edirne and spent two years in Bulgarian captivity'.

Upon his arrival in Istanbul after his release from captivity, he immediately went to the Sinai front following the outbreak of the Great War. He was honoured with the post of Director of Army Personnel Affairs in recognition of the acts of bravery he displayed on that front. Acting on his own initiative, he captured the Jewish spies—'Simi Simon, Sara Aranson, Ara Aranson, Suzi Liberman, etc.'—who were plotting to treacherously attack our army from behind, and had them shot in MERCE Square.

Following the defeat in the Great War, during 'the darkest days of the Turks', they arrived in Konya with Mersinli Cemal Pasha and established the National Front. He travelled to Istanbul as the first national representative and met with Caliph Sultan Vahideddin. Upon leaving the Caliph's residence, , he was arrested by order of Ferid Pasha's cabinet and imprisoned in the Bekir Ağa Barracks, where he was sentenced to death. On 2 October 1918, just two hours before his scheduled execution, Mersinli Cemal Pasha overthrew the Ferid Pasha cabinet and became Minister of War; consequently, instead of being taken to his execution, he was sent to the Ministry of War as an aide-de-camp.

Following Mustafa Kemal's march to Samsun, he secretly boarded Sadıkzade Arslan Bey's ship and arrived in Zonguldak. During the most turbulent days of the War of Independence, in Zonguldak

With a conscripted army of 12,000 men, he displayed numerous acts of heroism against the French forces, pinning them down where they stood.

Following the victory of the War of Independence, he resigned from the army.

Cevat Rıfat Atilhan's civilian life was spent in constant struggle right up until his death. Having laid aside the sword he wielded with such skill on the front l i n e , he took up his pen and wielded it with equal mastery. Hard times would not let him go! The explosion of a blank cartridge fired at a Jewish convert in Malatya led to his imprisonment for 11 months in his Istanbul home, separating him from his children, but he did not lose heart and continued his struggle with even greater energy than before.

In 1964, he was invited to the 'Congress of Islamic States' held in Mogadishu and was elected Chairman of the Congress's Executive Committee. This was Cevat Rıfat Atilhan's final major role, and on Saturday, 4 February 1967, he passed away. May Allah have mercy on him, and may his resting place be in Paradise. Amen.

Atillâ Atilhan. Kadıköy – 1968

THE INÖNÜ FIELD BATTLES IN ALL THEIR TRUTH

THE ROLE OF THE MAN WHO GAVE HIS NAME TO İNÖNÜ IN THIS VICTORY

The Battles of Inönü constitute the most crucial phase and focal point of the War of Independence and the National Struggle. Had victory not favoured the Turkish nation in the First and Second Battles of Inönü, there would be no such entity as 'Turkey' on the face of the earth today, and we would all have been consigned to the dustbin of history.

Had the initial clashes that began at the Geyve Pass not ended in the defeat of our enemies—both domestic and foreign—despite all the adverse conditions and impossibilities, it would not have been possible for the national forces to fight on the 'Inönü' battlefields either. Had we, God forbid, suffered a defeat and rout at the very outset, our long-standing enemies—who dragged us into this war, broke their word, and reneged on their signatures—along with the unscrupulous individuals they had bought off, and all those elements and turncoats praying for the Turkish people's defeat and downfall, would have joined forces and, in accordance with the plans they had prepared long beforehand, , would have descended upon us all at once

By exploiting this, they would have consigned this great and beloved nation into the dustbin of history.

THE CONVERTS, were so certain of the Turk's defeat and inevitable annihilation that they felt no need to conceal their true intentions for even a moment; instead, they laid bare the full extent of their malice at the first opportunity and responded to Mustafa Kemal Pasha's request—made for the needs of the nascent national army—as follows:

— We have no money to give to the Turks!… Nor do we even deign to even , For example: Once the current economic crises come to an end, *we* will certainly fulfil patriotic duty in this matter... They did not even feel the need for such caution; they did not even feel the need to to save time to save time .

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Here is the National Struggle; it began with many more intertwined events and instructive scenes not yet mentioned in this work, and my forefathers, who for centuries, under the Muslim flag bearing the Kalima-tul-Tawhid and with cries of 'Allah, Allah', drenched these lands in blood,—as a reward for their blessed service—earned divine aid and support, and from the Geyve Pass to Inönü, from Inönü to Dumlupınar, and finally at the quays of İzmir, they defeated the savage, bloodthirsty and cowardly

attacks, and we reached the final stage with the same enemies being driven into the sea at those very points.

Let's begin: Who were the heroes of the first victory won at the Strait of Geyve? One of them, whose name should be made known to the younger generation as he deserves , , and the other was Cavalry Major Atıf Bey, Commander of the 24th Division. İsmet Bey's name was not even mentioned at this time; he not only had no hope of such a victory, but was also entirely opposed to the very idea of embarking on a 'National Struggle'. At a time when actual hostilities had not yet begun, during the years of the armistice, I was an aide-de-camp at the Ministry of War, whilst he was the deputy undersecretary of the same ministry. One day, together with Ali Fuad Bey, the former Commander of the Eighth Corps and a former friend of the aforementioned, (General Ali Fuad Erdem), we went to Ismet Bey's house in Süteymaniye. He greeted us at the door and, as his first words, began with an introduction—

You and without preamble:

—- No action can now succeed or yield results. Propose to the Pasha that a peace delegation be formed and we go to Europe; let us bring this matter to a conclusion—whatever the cost. I shall go as an adviser, and you as my assistant.

—Sir, if we were to put an end to the current harsh conditions and our enemies' boundless ambitions so abruptly, they would consider even the province of Kastamonu too much for us.

— There is no other option!

— In that case, as a nation, we shall fight to the last man . If we lose the war and are defeated, can we not at least have history record that we ‘died like men’?

This sentence implies that even the glory and honour of the War of Independence like stolen goods , which had been seized like looted goods, so much so that he sent us away at the door without even letting us in. Enver Pasha’s aide, by his courage , was brought to Ankara under the coercion and even threats of Major Yenibahçeli Şükrü Bey, who is renowned for his courage. This individual is the sole instigator of all the unpleasant events we witnessed and lived through during the four long years of the War of Independence, beginning with İnönü; yet in this book, we have merely is İnönü battle battles .

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The Battles of İnönü, two of which ended in victory and one in defeat, hold great significance for the destiny of our nation. The fact that we emerged victorious in the first and second battles, despite losing the third, afforded us a final opportunity to reinforce the army, complete our preparations and make up for any shortcomings.

Interjecting here once more, in the midst of this turmoil, whilst the great commander might have felt anxious at the consequences of adverse events and misfortunes, even the lowest-ranking commander would not have dared to play with his personal honour and dignity—

we shall point out that he saw no harm in it. Shortly before the First Battle of İnönü began this man had set his sights on me... That I have no aim or ambition other than the salvation of my homeland is known first to God, and then to those who witnessed in previous wars are witness to the fact that I have no aim or ambition other than the liberation of my homeland. Yes, the Wars , our services were never denied; the great-spirited, noble Turkish commanders never stooped to the pettiness of denying our rights or envying our rank. Until power fell into the hands of İsmet Bey

...

* * *

Shortly before the First Battle of İnönü began, having assessed the situation, I withdrew a strong detachment from my forces from the enemy front in Zonguldak and sent it on its way towards the Western Front. İsmet Bey, who had either removed or demoted all commanders from Çerkes Ethem to Ali İhsan Pasha, Re'fet Pasha and Yakup Şevki Pasha, had not failed to extend his hand to us on two occasions and had also suspected me.

Before the First Battle of İnönü began, suspecting my position and the rank of ' ' I had earned through good faith, diligence and courage, he had decided to get rid of me. This decision was attempted to be implemented in a most childish and amateurish manner.

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Commander of Kastamonu and the surrounding area

Muhiddin

Faşa sent me a telegram stating the following:

'We would be grateful if you could honour us with your presence in Kastamonu so that we may benefit from your views and opinions on a certain matter...'

Such a statement could not have come from a man who, despite his military prowess, was extremely conservative and placed excessive importance on protocol. It was a trap. For this reason, I set off for Kastamonu accompanied by twenty Algerian and Tunisian soldiers, a platoon of Muslim Indians, and a company of cavalrymen, every one of whom had spent his life in the mountains. I also sent a telegram to Captain Cemal Bey (a retired colonel), the commander of the lance-bearing cavalry company serving as the guard of the Kastamonu Independence Court, instructing him to meet me on the Araç road with his troops. And so I entered Kastamonu with great pomp and ceremony. Regardless of their numbers, those who took part in the War of Independence can be divided into several categories. Some of them were those who sacrificed everything to rush to the defence of the homeland; others joined the cause out of necessity for a salary and livelihood; and still others simply found themselves within the national borders. Apart from these, there were those like İsmet Bey who were forcibly brought to Ankara...

As I entered Kastamonu, I was reflecting on these things as follows: Heroes... These were men who took pleasure in every manly endeavour, and they were on our side. Another group, however, thought: 'Let the homeland be saved, and thanks to that, let us live like lords; whilst our friends go to war, we—

stay at home. Bearing this in mind, I drove my troops, who were entering the city, at full gallop towards the command headquarters. The Muslim soldiers in their official French army uniforms, alongside the Muslim mujahideen (*) in Indian army attire, presented a magnificent sight. Upon seeing this from the window, Muhiddin Pasha hurried down in a state of anxiety and excitement and greeted us:

— 'As you wished, I have come, Your Excellency,' I replied.

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They had prepared four rooms for us at the best hotel along the river in Kastamonu. I posted two bayonet-wielding sentries at the door and told my men, 'Do not loosen the animals' reins; wait a little while.' An assassination attempt was expected at any moment. Our side could think of nothing but the liberation of the homeland. But those possessed of boundless ambition, and **the events** of our recent history, were creating this suspicion within us. At that moment, there was no way to touch our hearts. Because the guards of the Independence Court in Kastamonu, **along with the commander-**

(*) **These** were sent to him whilst he was the Ambassador to Kabul; **Fahreddin** Pasha, **the guardian of Medina**, **was** a paragon of virtue and heroism. There they spent days of ease and happiness.

I had even provided the orderlies for Muhiddin Pasha; they had no power whatsoever.

On the same day, the First Battle of Inönü had begun in full force. The situation was extremely critical. The French forces occupying Zonguldak must have shown some sign of movement, for the Governor of Zonguldak, Nusret Bey, was compelled to send the following coded message to the Commander in Kastamonu:

'Bad news is coming from the front. If, in the face of this situation, the regional commander, Cevad Rifât Bey, does not return to his post immediately, dire consequences are to be feared. No one else can take his place.'

The news that arrived was far from good. Our hopes began to fade. If, God forbid, we were to lose this first major battle, the internal strife that had not yet been quelled could lead to dire consequences.

Muhiddin Pasha sent his son, Ziya Bey, to fetch me in the middle of the night, asking us to meet at headquarters. I went immediately.

— If possible, return to your post at once

.

—No, Pasha, why did he summon me here?

I know your situation. Send those who are more capable than me in my place.

— My son, I am your teacher; I have a right over you. If there has been a misunderstanding, please bear with it. You are a patriotic man. The situation

, return to your duties immediately...

Yes, the situation was grave. The rope was about to snap. Despite everything, and in the name of the rights and interests of my beloved homeland, I returned to my post.

* * *

All these trivial details are important for highlighting the state of mind we were in when we address the subject in the future.

Most importantly, during those historic days when our great homeland was embroiled in a life-or-death struggle following so many upheavals, disasters and tragic events—even amidst that apocalyptic upheaval—those who thought of nothing but their own ambitions, tens of thousands of disabled Turkish children, were plundered.

We are speaking of the İnönü Battles. This is essential for ensuring that the legendary heroism of the War of Independence is properly passed on to younger generations. We can tell them:

'The true worth and value of those ambitious individuals who, seizing the opportunity that has come their way, see themselves as having reached the pinnacle of glory and honour, will inevitably come to light one day. For history cannot be whitewashed or deceived. The true nature of events unfolding before the eyes of a nation cannot be concealed for long.'

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Throughout the duration of the War of Independence, the nation and

The Turkish nation, men and women alike, from the age of seven to seventy, have achieved a final victory by fighting tooth and nail and expending their very last ounce of strength. The efforts expended, the blood shed and the sacrifices made to secure this victory are truly staggering. The Turkish nation, which has shed blood for the honour and dignity of Islam for over a thousand years, has been blessed with the good fortune of bringing the most difficult and hopeless days of its long history to a victorious conclusion through the 'National Struggle'. Alas, not a single name of the distinguished Turkish commanders who played a major part in securing this divine victory, nor of the Turkish fighters who made unparalleled sacrifices, has been passed on to the younger generations.

The most noteworthy battles of the War of Independence took place at İnönü. Fortune smiled upon us at times, whilst at others it plunged us into despair. However, it is remarkable that the entire credit for this great campaign—which will go down in history as a distinct chapter—should be attributed to a single individual as a mere token of appreciation. **That** individual, however, had no part **whatsoever** in these battles. It is to highlight this fact that we have written this work.

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Despite four long years of suffering, deprivation and poverty that at times gnawed away at human hope and morale, by the grace and generosity of Allah

From among the Wars of Independence, which ended in victory, we have chosen the Battle of İnönü as the most representative example. Were we to list, one by one, the names of those whose selfless acts of heroism stand out here and form the stuff of epic tales, it would fill volumes. These are undeniable facts. We mention only a few of these names here by way of example. Throughout history, prior to this, the rights of not a single hero who served in any of the wars in which the Turkish nation took part have been denied, nor has the name of any self-sacrificing individual been consigned to oblivion. Our history knows of no one other than those notorious figures who, for many years, ruled over the nation's destiny through stolen fame and names!

It is a bitter reality that a man who played no part in the 'İnönü' battles, after a great and unparalleled victory and a decisive battle had been won, went on to inflict a crushing defeat upon the nation **at Lausanne**, and yet, despite all this, remains **untouchable**.

* * *

After the 'National Struggle' ended in victory, such a strange atmosphere prevailed in this country that one cannot find its like in the annals of history.

Once the İnönüs became taboo, all the true heroes either withdrew from the stage or were cast aside like dirty handkerchiefs, and their names were rigorously concealed from the nation.

Today's enlightened youth, their sacred homeland's

. For during the long, nightmare-like era of the İnönüs, such gratitude was never shown.

All this amounts to consigning to oblivion those who, in large-scale battles such as the 'İnönü' campaigns, exerted superhuman efforts and left their arms, legs and precious bodies on the battlefield, and- and, in their place, to grant privileges to people who have absolutely no connection whatsoever to these battles—and who were even opposed to the National Struggle—out of a hideous delusion born of ambition and political concerns—and to place them in distinguished positions and posts for which they have neither the right nor the merit—gives rise to a rebellion within the human spirit, and destroys, tramples upon, and disregards all noble virtues, bringing forth a spirit of indifference.

To this end, we felt a spiritual and moral obligation to write this work in order to rescue the names of those true heroes—whose names have been forgotten and whose graves are unknown—from the abyss of oblivion, to record them in the honourable pages of history, and to grant the living an immortal existence; and we regarded this as a patriotic duty. Perhaps this will be the most commendable of all the services we have rendered to our country throughout the wars.

Mostly small acts that seem insignificant—

It is a well-known fact that movements and events have played a significant part in the achievement of great successes. Nevertheless, amidst the joy and excitement of dazzling victories , the humble services of those who played a part in this endeavour are often forgotten... Unfortunately, the true and real heroes of military victories, and even scientific discoveries, are either unknown to the public, or, even if known, are deliberately overlooked. The 'Unknown Soldier' monuments found almost everywhere are a fitting expression of the general respect and gratitude shown towards these small yet forgotten heroes.

If we were to delve a little into the Turkish Revolution and the Wars of Independence, we could discover heroes of every rank and stature whose services and merits have been deliberately downplayed and left unknown. For this reason, the greatest heroes of our liberation and revolution, the true architects of our political and military victories, are the Turkish nation itself. Thus, it is our foremost duty to fully comprehend the sentiments and capabilities of this great nation,

Despite this, İsmet Bey's attempt to monopolise the entire honour of the War of Independence for himself is an event that has absolutely no connection to the truth. We may regard these actions as the antithesis of a 'sense of inferiority' arising from always having to take orders and remain under control whilst the Commander-in-Chief was alive.

From the First World War and even, as some claim, from the...

The most striking characteristic of İsmet Bey, whom they have known since the Men campaign, is his ingratitude and lack of loyalty towards those who promoted him – starting with the Commander-in-Chief who elevated him to the highest position he could never have imagined – as well as towards his close comrades-in-arms and the heroes who rendered truly great services during the National Struggle.

We know that Ismet Bey was physically present at the First and Second 'İnönü' battles, but no one knows whether he performed service worthy of his rank and position in that apocalyptic conflict.

Whilst still a colonel, İsmet Bey had been forcibly brought to Anatolia long after the opening of the National Assembly to take part in the War of Independence; a few months later, he had succeeded Ali Fuad Pasha—who was renowned for his courage in successfully commanding the Western Front during its most trying moments—by undermining his position. The Western Front, which had previously been entirely under the command of Ali Fuad Pasha (Cebesoy), was divided into two; the northern section was assigned to Ismet Bey, and the southern section to Refet Bey. Following the Battles of İnönü, İsmet Bey, around whose name a legend of valour had been woven, began to see himself as a hero; and after the Second Battle of İnönü, having found a way to remove Refet Pasha from command, he took his seat at the helm of the entire Western Front, the historic Greek front command.

As will be clear from the following explanation, the First and Second Battles of İnönü were crucial to İsmet Bey's

was won not by virtue of command qualities and capabilities, but above all thanks to the self-sacrifice, devotion and heroism of the commanders, officers and men of the regiments that make up our national forces. In these battles, the Greeks committed such grave errors and the Turkish units fought so heroically that, had another commander been at the head of the Turkish forces instead of Ismet Bey, he could have made the most of this situation to secure a decisive outcome and ensure final victory even then. The war would also have ended sooner.

Following the Second Battle of İnönü, the forces on the Western Front had swelled to a formidable strength comprising fifteen infantry and four cavalry divisions. İsmet Bey was taken aback by the immense task that fell upon him, far exceeding his capabilities, and, due to the erroneous defensive measures he adopted, had virtually condemned his army to certain failure. The battles known as the 'Eskişehir–Kütahya' battles, which began with the Greek forces' advance from Bursa–Orhaneli–Tavşanlı–Dumlupınar towards Eskişehir to Seyitgazi, and known as the 'Eskişehir–Kütahya' battles, laid bare İsmet Bey's lack of command ability in all its starkness.

Meanwhile, he had taken the well-equipped and well-trained infantry and cavalry units under my command, deployed them to the left flank of the front, and, on the pretext of assigning me a more important task, had ordered me to remain in Ankara. Ankara, the city under my command—

cavalrymen under my command, and had taken up position on the left flank of my friend, the brave commander of the Fourth Division, the martyred Nazım Bey. However, disaster struck all too soon.

Following this disaster, it was only through the intervention of the Commander-in-Chief that the Turkish army was saved from complete collapse. During this terrible retreat, my units rendered great service and assistance in covering the retreat; however, this only served to increase İsmet Bey's animosity towards me. As we noted above, he was an enemy not only to me, but to all commanders, great and small, who had distinguished themselves through their heroism and victories—by the wisdom of God.

İsmet Bey's incompetence and lack of leadership during these battles were so severe that they would have led to his being sentenced to death before the court-martial. Indeed, a year later, the Greeks had sentenced Hacı Anesti, the commander of the Greek army in Anatolia, to death and executed him by firing squad for his incompetence in the battles of Afyon and Dumlupınar. İsmet Bey, however, escaped this fate solely due to the intervention of Mustafa Kemal Pasha.

Following the battles of Kütahya and Eskişehir, Ismet Bey was not left to his own devices either at Sakarya or during the Great Offensive; as everyone knows, the Commander-in-Chief personally took control of the army's command

and thereafter, thanks to the nation's efforts, the commanders' self-sacrifice, and the many distinguished unit commanders and brave soldiers whose names remain unknown to the nation, the sun of victory had risen upon our nation.

To illustrate Mr İsmet's lack of command ability, it suffices to examine the battles of Eskişehir and Kütahya. However, the crucial aspect of the matter is to demonstrate that Mr İsmet also managed the İnönü battles extremely poorly and that he had no part whatsoever in the victories achieved. For he boasts most of all about the İnönü victories and regards himself as the unrivalled architect of these triumphs. Yet the truth is far from this. To provide some insight into this matter, we shall endeavour to briefly analyse what Mr İsmet actually did during the İnönü battles—battles for which he bears the surname without having earned the right or merit in any way.

Ali Fuad Pasha, who had taken his place through a manoeuvre, had entrusted Ismet Bey with small but morally significant and reliable forces on the Western Front. The 24th Division was tasked with covering, observing and delaying the Greek forces in the Yenişehir–İnegöl–Pazarcık sector of Bursa. At the head of the division was a patriotic, nationalist, brave and honourable man named Atıf Bey, the cavalry major and hero of Geyve. The 61st Division was commanded by Major İzzeddin (General İzzeddin Çalışlar) and the 11th Division by Major Arif (later killed in the İzmir assassination

) and under the command of Suphi Bey, formed the reserve of the front near Eskişehir.

The Circassian Edhemin cavalry forces were also holding the Gediz front west of Kütahya. Afyon and Dumlupınar, the southern front forces under the command of Refet Bey were stationed. When the disagreement with Circassian Edhem came to light, Ismet Bey ordered the 24th Division assault battalion from the front and brought it to Eskişehir as a garrison. Upon the Supreme Commander's order and due to İsmet Bey's refusal to withdraw, when the pursuit by Çerkes Edhem's forces began their pursuit, Ismet and Refet Beys also ordered the major part of the forces under their command, first to Kütahya and from there to Gediz. The possibility of counter-moves that moving so far away from the main bases and defensive positions with the entire army might provoke in the Greek army had not been considered at all, nor taken into account. At the İnönü position, selected as the definitive defensive area, it was essential not to neglect to station at least some weak units. This oversight constitutes a most serious lapse and error on the part of İsmet Bey. İsmet Bey had not even visited the İnönü positions once before... Upon receiving news on the morning of 6 January 1921 that the Greeks had launched an advance from Bursa towards Eskişehir, İsmet Bey had travelled from the Efendi Bridge near Gediz to Kütahya and on 9 January

He remained in Kütahya until the evening of the 27th. During the four days he spent in Kütahya, his entire activity consisted of bringing the columns he had advanced as far as the Gediz area back to Kütahya as quickly as possible and dispatching them from there to the İnönü station, as well as monitoring the Greek advance from Kütahya and the surrounding areas.

It is worth noting that, at precisely this moment, he left the Zonguldak Front—which was under my command, situated some distance from the main front and forming its far-right flank, and which was engaged against the **French** occupation forces—leaderless; through various intrigues, as detailed above, he brought the troops as far as Kastamonu and kept them there for two or three *days*. İsmet Bey recognised no enemy, whether near or far, great or small; he seized every opportunity. The sheer numbers of his troops, their superiority in supplies and equipment, and their outstanding level of training and discipline had certainly not escaped İsmet Bey's notice. The resistance and effort we displayed in the face of an enemy vastly superior in numbers, reinforced by the sea, and strong and vigorous, rather than inspiring satisfaction, had aroused the ambition of the Commander of the Western Front. Just as a goat fears for its life and a butcher fears for his fat, we were pondering how to rescue our beloved homeland from this dire, chaotic situation, and while we were sacrificing our youth, our future and our lives for this cause, what was Ismet Bey thinking? The method employed to bring me to Kastamonu was neither honourable nor military in nature. In the cipher message sent by İsmet Bey to Muhiddin Pasha **in Kastamonu:**

There are expressions and manoeuvres such as ‘summoning Muazzeze and Mutayyibe to Kastamonu and detaining them there without letting them suspect a thing’.

All these details are significant as an expression of a certain mindset and in demonstrating how ambitions and personal considerations operated even during the nation’s most perilous days.

Having sent a well-equipped, exceptionally trained force of one thousand five hundred men to the İnönü battles, and having ultimately fled from Ankara to take part in person with the remaining troops at my disposal, I feel justified in including these trivial details in this account.

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The Battle of Inönü had now begun... In the midst of this turmoil, Ismet Bey’s position should not have been in Kütahya, but first in Eskişehir and then immediately in Inönü. Behind the lines, there were men who would transport the troops to the battlefield by rail as quickly as possible. Whilst Ismet Bey was still in Kütahya, the 58th Infantry Regiment and a battery from the 4th Division of the heroic Nazım Bey, personally leading them from Ankara, arrived at Inönü first; followed by the 70th Regiment of the 11th Division under the command of Arif Bey, who arrived at Inönü on 8 January 1921 and took up defensive positions in the areas allocated to them. Following them, the 127th Infantry Regiment also arrived at İnönü from Kütahya. The Greeks, meanwhile, advanced with a regiment towards Yenişehir—

From Bilecik, three regiments advanced from İnönü towards Pazarcık, whilst another regiment marched along the Mezit Valley towards Bozüyük. İsmet Bey had calculated that the 24th Division, positioned ahead of the İnönü sector at Bilecik and Pazarcık and further forward in scattered formations, could buy the necessary time until reinforcements arrived from Kütahya and Ankara. As İsmet Bey's sole concern was to gain time in the forward positions, he had not issued any instructions to the 24th Division regarding the primary defensive duties at the İnönü position until the very last moment. Another major error on İsmet Bey's part was that he had deliberately kept the heroic commander Atıf Bey and his division in a state of limbo. The first thought that comes to mind at this point is this: the heroic Atıf Bey was the man who overcame the initial misfortune of the war at the Geyve Pass. Had Ali Fuad Pasha and his men not exerted such great strength and effort, no army could have been formed, nor could the national war have succeeded; this sacred campaign would have died before it even began. It was precisely these heroic men, who had risen to prominence and achieved success through God's grace and assistance, who were to be sidelined so that the ambitious might remain unchallenged, and so that the aforementioned might enter history with honour and glory—yet unjustly and undeservedly.

Ask today's young people: they know Lola Brigida's family history going back seven generations, yet they may never have heard the name Atıf Bey.

Here is this distinguished commander, who at the very least defended the northern section of his regiment's railway line on 7 January—

Had it been made clear that an attack was imminent, the division would have dispatched the 32nd Regiment, which was under its command in the vicinity of Bilecik, to Metres Hill in good time, and would not have found itself in the difficult position of having to withdraw without putting up a defence as a result of numerous errors. The 24th Division's assault battalion, which had been held in Eskişehir until the very last moment, was sent from Eskişehir to Karaköy instead of being dispatched to the division's main defensive position and Metres Hill—the most critical point of that position—and was subsequently driven on to Pazarcık. Ahead of Pazarcık, the 126th Regiment on the Nazif Pasha hills had retreated in disarray before the superior enemy forces to Pazarcık and from there to Inönü. It was only natural that an assault battalion and a supply battalion arriving from Palatlı could not hold their ground against three enemy regiments in the west and east of Pazarcık, particularly given the panic caused by the 126th Regiment's collapse. West of Pazarcık, along the Ahmedler–Franlar line, these two battalions were spread across a very wide front and, consequently, were unable to mount a substantial resistance; part of the assault battalion was taken prisoner, whilst the rest scattered. Even in this scattered and extraordinarily difficult situation, the companies under the command of some of our young and brave officers found themselves on their own and strove to fulfil their duties despite being leaderless and hopeless. Many of our comrades-in-arms who, like us, closely followed these fierce battles and are still alive have borne witness to the following: The commander of the first company of the assault battalion, Second Lieutenant

They have not forgotten how Halil Nuri Bey's — Yurdakul— (1) company held out to the very end and fought with superhuman courage and heroism against superior forces.

We shall explain in detail shortly the even greater services and successes of this self-sacrificing and noble son of the nation in the Second Battle of İnönü. Here, , a question naturally comes to mind: is it really such an extraordinary thing for a company commander to have carried out his wartime duties as expected, demonstrating courage and self-sacrifice? Yes, in these wars, all the officers and men of the army performed their duties with a bravery and self-sacrifice characteristic of the Turks. However, the misfortunes and disarray caused by p o o r leadership and a lack of courage during these wars, which we have explained in detail , had such exceptional individuals not emerged amidst the chaos and disarray caused by poor leadership and a lack of courage, then, for example, the panic resulting from the disintegration of the 126th Regiment would have spread to all units, and the enemy would have easily secured a victory. As we mentioned earlier, the names of such exceptionally capable and highly self-sacrificing individuals are always consigned to oblivion; and when politics enters the picture, the great figures—no matter how great their faults—come to the fore and attain a reputation of

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(1) Former Member of Parliament for Niğde and retired colonel

deceit has seated them in history's greatest seat of honour... Yet it must be known that this is but temporary. For history is never deceived. Who knows how many pens have recorded the life-and-death struggles of that day, and how many people have witnessed these events. **When** the time **comes**, **these** will come to light... False reputations, just like deceptive dawns, fade away in an instant.

On the afternoon of 9 January 1921, the Greeks advanced from one side via Pazarcık–Karaköy and from the other via the Mezit Valley, clashing with the western section of the İnönü position. That day, by evening, the 58th Regiment of the Fourth Division under the heroic Nâzım Bey and the 70th Regiment of the **11th** Division had succeeded in pinning the Greeks down in their positions.

On the evening of 9 January, Ismet Bey, who was still in Kütahya, finally decided to set out for İnönü after receiving these battle reports. This delay was Ismet Bey's third major mistake. On the morning of 10 January, by the time the arrived at the İnönü station, fighting **had resumed** along the entire front with the Greeks**.** The situation was far from good; the 24th Division—

The Turks had abandoned the **Gündüzbey–Metrestepe–Çepni** positions without a fight and withdrawn to the line further back **at Beş** Kardeşler–Zemzemiye. The Greeks had advanced as far as Poyra from Bozüyük and were about to encircle the right flank of the Fourth and Eleventh Divisions, which were fighting valiantly ahead. At **that** moment, **the first battalion of the** 174th **Regiment,** which had reached **İnönü station,**

The 24th Division's assault battalion and the headquarters cavalry squadron were immediately tasked with holding the ridges north of İnönü to defend the right flank of the 4th Division. Despite this, İsmet Bey feared that the 4th and 11th Divisions would be encircled and annihilated. Upon reaching the hill east of İnönü from the front headquarters at İnönü station, İsmet Bey, overcome with anxiety and panic over the 24th Division's retreat, immediately ordered the 4th and 11th Divisions to retreat at 14:00 in broad daylight (1). However, the heroic intervention of the 24th Division's assault battalion, the 1st Battalion of the 174th Regiment, and the front-line cavalry squadron had completely eliminated the danger. In such a situation, it would have been possible to wait until darkness fell; indeed, these units remained in their positions after dusk and even until midnight, and only withdrew to the village of Oklubal, east of Inönü, upon receiving orders.

When the Greeks encountered heavy artillery, machine-gun and infantry fire at the İnönü position—particularly on the left flank of this sector—they concluded that the assault they had envisaged, or more accurately, the reconnaissance attack, had failed, and on the night of 10–11 January, they retreated from Bo-

(1) At this time, a cavalry detachment I had dispatched from Çaycuma—small in number but possessing great combat power—was on its way to reach the right flank of the front.

had burned and evacuated the village and withdrawn.

On the morning of 11 January, a villager was the first to report that the Greeks had withdrawn, and this report was later confirmed by reports from the units.

As can be seen, when İsmet Bey arrived at the Inönü battlefield from Kütahya—having remained unnecessarily absent from the battlefield—he was unable to rally his troops and committed a grave error, unprecedented in military history, by ordering a retreat in broad daylight, As this explanation makes clear, the true heroes of the First Battle of Inönü were the commanders of the 4th Division, Nazım, and the 11th Division, Arif, along with the commanders of the 24th Division, Atıf Bey—along with the 58th, 70th and 127th Regiments, the 24th Division's assault battalion, the 174th Regiment's 1st Battalion, and their brave and self-sacrificing commanders and soldiers. After these battles, İsmet Bey was promoted to the rank of brigadier general—as if as a reward for his mistakes and incompetence. Following the battle, İsmet Bey failed to fulfil his duty as a human being by commending, congratulating, and promoting his comrades who had served in this battle. İsmet Bey's negligence had offended many distinguished and outstanding commanders. Atıf Bey, commander of the 24th Division, who had fallen into a dire situation due to İsmet Bey's negligence and mismanagement, was immediately sent into retirement after the battle. İsmet Bey attributed the faults and sins of this battle to this—

he had also committed such a minor offence as loading it. His entire political career unfolded in this manner.

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In the command and management of the Second Battle of İnönü, Ismet Bey's errors were far greater and too numerous to count compared to the first. Here, we shall confine ourselves to mentioning only a few of the most glaring ones.

Following the First Battle of Inönü, the national army was rapidly reinforced. I contributed to this reinforcement with two battalions in addition to my own forces. The Greek front, as before, was divided between Ismet and Refet Beys. Ismet Bey had prepared to repel the expected Greek offensive in the direction of Eskişehir, once again at the Inönü position. The main position was held by the 61st, 24th and 11th Divisions.

The First Division and the Third Cavalry Division, under the command of Kemaleddin Sâmî, have been stationed in the Yenişehir–Inegöl sector for the past three months, carrying out the covering duties previously performed by the 24th Division. As the Greeks did not accept the decisions of the London Conference, they too had prepared themselves and chose to resolve their claims by force of arms. On this occasion, the Greeks, with three strong divisions, set out from the east of Bursa on 23 March 1921, advancing via Bilecik and Pazarcık towards Gündüz-

They launched an attack against the Bey–Metrestepe–Bozalan line. An advanced position had been established in front of our main position, running along the ridges of Ahlat Pass–Keben–Isırganlı–Hamidiye. The 24th Division was initially positioned with its full strength along the forward Isırganlı–Hamidiye line. The third Greek division, the easternmost of the three, clashed with the main position of the 61st Division at Gündüzbey on 26 March 1921, before the second Greek division further west. The 10th Greek Division in the centre, mistaking the 24th Division's forward position for the main position, was held up in front of this position for two days. The seventh Greek division, the westernmost, had, however, gradually fallen behind between Karaköy and Pazarcık. It is evident that this created a situation highly favourable to the Western Front. The twenty-fourth division played a major role in bringing about this favourable situation. Our division succeeded in giving the Greeks the impression that the Isırganlı–Hamidiye forward position was the main position through the arrangements it had made. In particular, the highly active movements and initiatives of the company on the outer flank of the 143rd Regiment played a very significant part in the attack on the Greek division's outermost flank. Here is an example demonstrating that a single company, when led by a heroic commander, can play a role significant enough to alter the fate of the entire front... With this example, we possess companies, battalions, regiments, divisions and corps composed of soldiers as peerless as the Turks—

I can judge the incompetence, cowardice and ineptitude of a great commander.

There is another example from the First World War that we have experienced first-hand— —which we cannot fail to mention... The First World War... The Palestine front and the Second Battle of Gaza... Under a scorching sun, with inadequate equipment, insufficient supplies, soldiers without uniforms and men burning with thirst... In a state of half-hunger, half-satiety, such a fierce battle rages from dawn till dusk, such a passionate struggle that one cannot see one's surroundings amidst the roar of the guns and weapons exploding on both sides. As a company commander, I am on the far left flank of the front. The enemy is waging a delaying action against me; their forces are very weak. They have concentrated all their strength between Gaza and Tanıktepe... In this hellish battle, it is hard to tell which side is victorious and which is defeated. Blood is flowing in torrents. People are in a state of utter bewilderment... The young soldiers have clenched their teeth and are fighting tooth and nail. Our nerves are so taut that it is impossible to determine the outcome of the battle. Our Third Cavalry Brigade has penetrated deep behind enemy lines; perhaps they are carrying out a large-scale encirclement manoeuvre. Victory hangs in the balance. It could go either way... Just then, a cavalry squadron under the command of Captain Şerif Güralp (a retired cavalry brigadier general) draws its swords and charges into the enemy's rear...

He launched such a charge that the scene was thrown into utter chaos. This situation roused me to action. I ordered my infantry to fix bayonets, and with all my fury I charged the enemy's rear with such ferocity that the situation suddenly became chaotic; believing they were being flanked on their right, the enemy began to withdraw in utter disarray. We added chaos to the chaos. Two companies—one cavalry, one infantry—turned the scales of victory in our favour, and the second Battle of Gaza. I learnt this from Colonel Rüşdü, commander of the 16th Division, who came to see me in the late afternoon—by car, as he suffered from rheumatism. He congratulated us, kissed us on the forehead, wept, and rejoiced. Who was this Rüşdü Bey? I am only just learning: it was Rüşdü Pasha of Erzurum, who was unjustly executed by İnönü during the Izmir assassination plot! Oh, fate, oh fate. How useful you are to the ambitious...

...How high did you raise them, when they didn't deserve it?...

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Let us return to the battlefield:

The Greek division, which came under attack from the flank, believing that the Turkish forces would defend this line and attempt to encircle them, shifted its centre of gravity to the left flank to escape this danger and, having made preparations, launched an attack; this manoeuvre bought us two days' time. Behold, even the small units under the command of heroes played a great

role in the war... The commander of this company was Halil Nuri Yurdakul, a young lieutenant who shone like a star in the Inönü battles and later became the MP for Niğde. Even the name of this self-sacrificing young comrade has been sought to be forgotten, just like his peers. Yet, as we shall see later, this comrade played a major role in the Inönü battles; it was this young commander who paved the way to victory.

In these circumstances, the most appropriate and sensible course of action for Ismet Bey, Commander of the Western Front, would have been to immediately launch an attack with his superior forces against the Third Greek Division, which had advanced to the right flank of the Inönü position in the Gündüzbey sector. For this attack, in addition to the 61st Division and Nazım Bey's 4th Division sent from Kütahya, there were my own units arriving from Zonguldak and the forces of Halid Bey (Pasha), renowned for his bravery, brought from Kocaeli to the Gündüzbey sector, as well as the First Division gathered at Inönü—in total, more than four divisions could have been utilised, and the fortunes of war might have favoured us on that day, at that very moment. This great opportunity was missed, and we failed to capitalise on the stroke of luck that had befallen us. Moreover, the 11th Division, which was stationed on the eastern flank of the Inönü position, was needlessly withdrawn from its post and, together with the 3rd Cavalry Division, sent over Sarı Dağ towards Pazarcık to launch an attack on the left flank of the 7th Greek Division.

During this operation, the 4th Division at Kavalca

The left flank was held back in that sector. This attack by the 11th Division across rugged terrain was easily repelled by the Greeks, and our division remained needlessly away from its main position for two days. This aimless manoeuvre, which took the attacking left flank 10–12 kilometres away, served no purpose other than to weaken the subsequent resistance of our left flank. Thus, a major opportunity was missed, similar to the third Greek division striking our right flank on its own two days before the other two divisions. On 28 March, all Turkish forces engaged in extremely fierce and bloody battles along the main line of defence. As a result of these battles, which involved attacks and counter-attacks, the Greeks were forced to retreat on 1 April 1921, leaving the battlefield to the glorious and heroic Turkish forces. In these battles, commanders on the front line, including Kemaleddin Sami and Halid Bey, along with many commanders of all ranks, were wounded, and many others sacrificed their precious lives for the sake of this homeland, attaining the rank of martyr. Our heroic soldiers, too, as they had done throughout history, did not hesitate to shed their blood or sacrifice their lives.

The principal factor in securing this victory—that is, the Second İnönü Victory—was the failure of the Grand National Assembly at that time to muster sufficient forces to halt the Greek invasion following the First İnönü Battles

and its willingness to spare no effort in this regard, making every possible sacrifice.

Given the extraordinary efforts expended by the late Marshal Fevzi Çakmak and those around him, did Ismet Bey, Commander of the Western Front, fulfil his duty and prove himself worthy of such self-sacrifice? No one can deny that our soldiers fought like lions. However, no one has been able to claim that Ismet Bey managed the heroic units placed under his command with due diligence and flawlessly during the First and Second Inönü Battles. In the First Battle of İnönü, whilst our forces were sufficient and our combat strength was high, and despite numerous opportunities presenting themselves, this commander—who failed to demonstrate the ability to capitalise on any of them and who was adrift in deep hesitation and cowardice—even after the Second Battle of İnönü, failed to pursue the enemy and-nans to withdraw comfortably and without facing any pressure, has been strongly and bitterly criticised by every rank of our army who participated in these battles.

Mr İsmet's unforgivable negligence and lack of courage had been severely criticised and reprimanded by the late Marshal Çakmak. After the Second Battle of İnönü, Mr İsmet's courage, vigour and military authority were matched by those of Refet Pasha, whom we had witnessed on the Gallipoli front during the First World War, in every

He prevented him from doing what he wished and finally succeeded in removing even him—Ali Fuat Pasha (Cebesoy), one of the founders of the War of Independence, distinguished for his courage and authority—from the front. Ali Fuat Pasha is a man of remarkable courage, a man of discernment, and one who recognises the worth of others. He entrusted me with a duty many times greater than my rank and age, and, by God's grace, commended and encouraged us for every success we achieved; he was a soldier through and through. Even such a powerful commander was removed from the front, and the entire Western Front fell entirely into the hands of Ismet Bey. Had Commander İsmet Bey, left without a rival, managed to cope with the heavy burden of his duties, succeeded, and ensured that the blood shed was not in vain, perhaps everything would have been forgotten, and the injustices and missteps might well have been excused.

Although Mr İsmet, left to his own devices, had been placed in command of an army of ninety thousand men, his inability to make effective use of this vast force meant that he was compelled to retreat as far as the banks of the Sakarya, and to do so in a disorganised and chaotic manner. Indeed, during these retreats, a great deal of military equipment, artillery and men—which had been procured with great difficulty—were lost.

It became clear that Ismet Bey was incapable of commanding large forces, and Supreme Commander Mustafa Kemal Pasha and

The Marshal, all the soldiers around him, and the entire army had come to this conclusion. From then on, his role within the army was reduced to nothing more than implementing the Commander-in-Chief's orders and ideas to the letter and without reservation; this situation runs counter to the art and tradition of warfare. It is a well-known fact that every commander informs the other commanders under his command only of the task and objective to be carried out; he does not interfere in the details, and everything beyond that is left to the knowledge and discretion of the commander receiving the order. This classical procedure, in force in every army, was abandoned due to Ismet Bey's incompetence, and he was reduced to a position where he merely received orders and carried them out exactly as given. Ali Fuad Pasha and Refet Pasha, however, were not like this. They were authorities who possessed their own will, ability and independence (1).

Now, I am quoting the following verbatim from pages 388–389 of the fifth volume of Ali İhsan Pasha's work *My War Memoirs*:

On 4 March 1939, he invited me to the reception he held at Dolmabahçe Palace. I went. There, the banality

(1) We must not forget Ali İhsan Pasha. This man was an unparalleled commander of his time, and had İsmet Bey not been jealous of him and had given him a chance, we could certainly have won the war easily. Could İsmet Bey ever have done such a thing? After the war, he took his revenge on him, dragging him through prisons and military courts.

He offered me a seat in parliament, but did not follow through. I realised he was a cunning old fox.

This man has never done, nor will he ever do, any good for this poor nation. Neither during his military service, nor when he was a minister or prime minister, nor during his presidency has he been of any real benefit to this nation.

However, he carried out the orders given by Mustafa Kemal, relying on them, with the loyalty and diligence of a mere order-taker, and with the discipline and sentiment of a puppet. Whenever he found himself in a position to think, decide and act independently, he always faltered and ruined matters.

Surely he ought to have demonstrated his greatest skills in the military, shouldn't he? No! It was when he was in command that he first displayed his worst incompetence. During the First World War, whilst commanding a corps in Palestine, he committed the worst atrocities at Bir Sebe, but Fevzi Pasha rescued him from the clutches of Leman von Sanders. In contrast to his plan to flee on a horse, leaving his corps leaderless, further west, Refet Pasha, with his corps, organised the defence of Gaza and did not allow the British to capture the city. Although he was summoned on numerous occasions to participate in the War of Independence in Anatolia, he did not go; and although he was eventually forcibly deployed and, under the patronage of Mustafa Kemal, appointed Commander of the Western Front, he displayed the worst possible incompetence in command and leadership during his first engagement with the Greeks, the First Battle of Inönü

has shown. Whilst the Greeks were retreating on one hand, on the other hand, due to an inability to grasp and assess the situation, he ordered the forces comprising the 4th, 11th and 24th Divisions to retreat. When the Third Greek Corps advanced from Bursa on 7 January 1921 with three divisions in three columns, instead of becoming bogged down in Kütahya, he should have immediately proceeded to the vicinity of Bozüyük or İnönü stations to swiftly organise a defensive formation-west, his hesitation kept him in Kütahya for days, and he was only able to reach the İnönü station on 11 January, four days later; a few artillery shells fired at this station by a very weak enemy force located near Bozüyük were sufficient to panic Ismet and cause him to flee, he abandoned the station and went to the town of İnönü; there, judging the situation to be dire due to his own short-sightedness, he immediately ordered all his divisions to retreat that very afternoon; whilst he should have remained there for a while to direct the withdrawal, he fled to the village of Ballı, spending the night of 11–12 January in this village in a state of indecision, before leaving this place at dawn and taking refuge at Çukurhisar station, where he sought shelter in a train bound for Eskişehir; the battalions searched for the front-line commander for a long time but were only able to find him the following day. Although the Greeks continued their probing or reconnaissance attacks on 8, 9, 10 and 11 January, they began to withdraw on the night of 11–12 January; the 11th Division, thanks to its reconnaissance units, realised that the enemy was retreating and the front...

Although he had intended to inform his commander, Ismet Pasha was only able to reach Çukurhisar station on the afternoon of 12 January. Unconvinced by the enemy's retreat, Ismet Pasha dispatched a squad consisting of an officer and several soldiers towards Bozüyük; as they approached Bozüyük, they encountered two villagers who informed them: 'Bozüyük is deserted. The enemy withdrew completely exactly thirty-six hours ago.'

This man, who had managed the First Battle of İnönü so poorly, also conducted the subsequent battles up to the Battle of Sakarya with even greater incompetence and ineptitude. Having acted so poorly as a commander in the face of the enemy, İsmet showed no initiative whatsoever at the Lausanne peace negotiations in his capacity as Foreign Minister and Chief Delegate, and finally, in January 1922, the British Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon. (Incompetence and Ignorance) .

From this wretch, for the sake of the homeland service for the homeland have thus always been disappointed.

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We also include here an article we found in issue no. 202 of the *Yeni İstiklâl* newspaper:

COMMANDER İSMET İNÖNÜ

At a **time when** the Battle of İnönü had become exceptionally fierce and the enemy had gained the upper hand**, the İnönü Army**

and, taking his leave, headed off in the direction of Gündüzbey, where he took refuge in a barn. The great commander (!), who had forced his entire army to retreat, and who, not content with that, had fled his command post, was sweating it out in a barn, plotting his escape, when he was discovered by a corporal from the Dündar forces. The corporal shouted at him:

— Sir, the enemy has begun to retreat! Take command of your army!

Upon this, the great general (!) is practically dragged to the front; he takes command with the bearing of a lion; and he is marching towards the dawn of days when he will take pride not only in

but also towards the dawn of days when h e would take pride in having 'overcome the nation's ill fortune'.

The late Marshal Çakmak's remarks to a group visiting him in hospital regarding the so-called 'national' leader, whom he had refused to receive despite the latter's arrival at the hospital at that time:

'— This man is a deserter, and his punishment is to be shot. If God grants me the opportunity, one day I shall make it known to the entire Turkish public how he abandoned his command and deserted the army.'

One of the distinguished figures of our Foreign Ministry, former Member of Parliament for Sivas, Sedat Zeki Örs, who served as Director-General of the First Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and held various diplomatic posts in foreign countries:

'In 1949, I was the Consul-General in Alexandria. There, I met Prince Abdulmumin of Egypt. On one occasion, he told me that when he came to Istanbul in 1947, he had hired Inönü's former chauffeur as his own. He added, citing that driver, that Ismet Pasha was a man who had deserted during the Second Battle of Inönü, but that this incident had subsequently been 'covered up'. In fact, whilst the Prince was travelling by car from Ankara to Istanbul, they passed through the areas where the battles had taken place, and the driver pointed out, showing exactly how his former employer had fled the war and where he had taken refuge...

The Prince added: 'He said he was surprised by such an accusation, but that this driver could not have concocted such a colossal lie out of the blue.'

After the 'great soldier' (!) became President and established his accursed regime… when he sought to distort the course of military history, two honourable soldiers could not tolerate the situation and resigned.

And thus, Ismet Bey came under the watchful eye and control of the Commander-in-Chief and the Marshal. It is for this very reason that, when power fell into Ismet Bey's hands by sheer chance and due to Marshal Çakmak's ill-advised decision, his first act was to remove the Marshal from the army.

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From a military standpoint, command, service and merit—Was the political life of Ismet Pasha—whose scope was extremely limited and simple, and who was condemned to work under the command and control of those greater than himself—any different? Had anyone other than Ismet Pasha, who held the destiny of this beloved homeland in his hands for twenty-seven years as Prime Minister and President, been in his place, the country would have progressed much further, its prestige would have grown, its forces would have been consolidated, and its people would have witnessed prosperity and progress. İsmet Pasha has reached out to the nation's destiny, burdened by the mistakes of the past and, in particular, the defeat and mismanagement at Lausanne, which the nation could never shake off.

At this time, when he has grown old and his ambition has reached its peak, the impotence, hesitation and cowardice he has displayed in the 'Cyprus' issue have placed the Turkish nation in a most humiliating position before both friends and foes.

Endless bluffs and blatant displays of cowardice, and finally, these words—which have never before passed the lips of any prime minister—are a sign of how utterly subjugated a nation has become today, a nation that once defied the whole world and made its voice heard throughout the universe. This statement, made immediately after a bombardment lasting just a few hours was halted, was sufficient to lay bare all the hidden truths:

'THEY SAID STOP, SO WE STOPPED!'

What sort of statement is this? A nation obeying orders to this extent

and will it come under pressure? Cyprus is slipping from our grasp; the people there are being mercilessly slaughtered. Just as they did during the War of Independence, the barbaric Greeks, recognising no rights or humanity, are committing every manner of atrocity, murder and extermination, plunder and savagery, yet everything that could be done in response is set aside, and the matter is dismissed with a shameful statement like 'They said stop, so we stopped!' This too is a sort of Inönü battle and an Inönü legacy... In one instance, he abandons the front line and becomes an unrivalled hero; in another, he suffers a political defeat and becomes an unparalleled leader. What an unfortunate nation we are, O Lord!

We have provided some strategic information regarding the Battles of Inönü, which constituted the most crucial phase of the War of Independence. We have provided information that allows one to gauge the courage, self-sacrifice, ability, authority and command skills of İsmet Bey—who outmanoeuvred and outwitted numerous commanders, both high-ranking and low-ranking, before ultimately assuming the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Western Front—during these battles.

Despite the vastness and grandeur of the duty borne by a man who would play the most crucial role in the nation's future and destiny during a war of life and death for a country, a great homeland, how utterly helpless and wretched he was, this entire nation, which has participated in this apocalyptic war and sacrificed everything for it, trampling their lives and futures underfoot, where the names of countless heroes and fighters have been erased, their services denied, and

Instead, we have recorded a page of history on which the idol of İnönü was erected. Over the past fifty years, none of the true heroes and fighters— —who could have served as examples to *future* generations for the sake of the nation's future have been given due recognition. Yet, to save a homeland on the brink of collapse, the Turkish nation mobilised in its entirety, despite all hopelessness and impossibility, and in the end, the homeland was saved. These heroes are too numerous to list; this is, in its entirety, the noble and self-sacrificing Turkish nation. .

The strange and painful truth is this: certain ambitious individuals, who have denied the labours of the past and built their thrones of ambition upon rivers of blood, and who have denied the honour and service of the martyrs and veterans, have, alas, for years failed to refrain from presenting themselves as the nation's guides and leaders, even before their own identities had been properly established. We shall serve history by presenting a few of the true heroes against those who have even usurped the names of the battlefields where the battles took place. The individuals we have chosen are people whose boundless self-sacrifice we have witnessed with our own eyes. Otherwise, the noble Turks who sacrificed their precious possessions and lives in the 'Wars of Independence' are too numerous to count, an endless stream...

52.

NEZAHAT ONBAŞI

If I may use the expression, she was the Joan of Arc of the War of Independence... A girl orphaned at a young age... A young girl who, with her small and frail frame, struck such terror into the enemy and demoralised them to such an extent that her father's regiment came to be known as the **'Girls'** Regiment'... The War of Independence was a miracle achieved by people of this spirit. This honour, the full glory of this miracle, has been plundered. So many young girls, so many young men, and even so many hunchbacked men and women—legendary, mythical heroes... To attribute the miracles achieved by all these people to certain mortals as if they were state-monopoly goods—this is simply unacceptable, and that is why I am writing this work. History will record many things regarding the general course of the national struggle. For my part, I can offer the following summary:

'Having achieved *an* unparalleled victory by overcoming adversity and defying **misfortune, the Turkish nation suffered a crushing defeat at Lausanne.'**

This was only natural... People who remained perpetually distant from the battlefield where tens of thousands of Turkish children shed rivers of blood for the nation's salvation, and who remained unaware of the agony of these wars,

It is only natural that they should be defeated at Lausanne, before the modern Crusaders, saying, **'After our own precious lives, the flood**'; what is unnatural is that these men

by trampling on history, becoming a scourge upon the nation and reigning over this liberated homeland for years on end.

Just like an unknown soldier, we are rescuing an unknown Turkish girl from the abyss of oblivion. The French canonised Joan of Arc. What did we do? Indeed, the matter even reached the National Assembly; orators spoke, words were spoken, and then it was forgotten. What is the result? Nothing! This generous, this gracious, this noble nation — this lady, who is today the wife of a Colonel — how has it honoured her? Not at all! But this Turkish girl has one flaw: she is Turkish... Had she been a convert, a Halide Edib, her name and fame would have soared to the heavens... We saw Halide Edib in Syria and Lebanon and during the War of Independence. A political player who created legends and fairy tales in the rear echelons and in books...

Why can't we, as Turks, set a real 'Nezahat Onbaşı' against the fantasy of a 'Halide Edib Onbaşı'? We simply can't... How,

If we have let the entire honour of the 'National Struggle' slip through our fingers, then we have let these things slip through our fingers in the same way... I have brought to life in these lines a couple of examples I have witnessed. Should the other heroes of the War of Independence also speak of what they have seen, then the true heroes will emerge, whilst the impostors will be consigned to eternal spiritual death...

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The National Assembly of the National Struggle... A community of heroes

... A community of men of merit... Somehow, thanks to the Bursa deputy, Mr Emin, this matter was brought before the Assembly, and on 30 January 1337, during its 140th session, the Assembly addressed this issue. We reproduce verbatim, from the official minutes, the motion submitted by Mr Emin to the Assembly that day and the discussions of that day:

To the Honourable Presidency of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey:

'The daughter of Colonel Hafız Halid, who actively participated in engagements on various battlefronts, particularly in the Battles of Kedos and İnönü, and who constantly encouraged the troops and even the officers, is twelve years old. I request that the first Independence Medal be awarded to Nezahat Hanım and that the proposal be submitted to the General Assembly for approval.

Bursa MP,
Surgeon Emin

Emin Bey (Bursa) — Sir, this young lady known as Nezahat Hanım, a little girl of eight, was orphaned at a very young age; as her father had no other relatives, she fell into his care and grew up amidst the war on various fronts during the Great War. The gentleman known as Hafız Halid Bey is also a most valiant commander of ours. She is a child worthy of such a hero. That child has killed a hostile enemy with her own hands; whenever a *breath*—

If Rin sees a soldier wavering, he immediately runs to his side, says, ‘Come on, let’s fight together,’ and fights alongside him. If she were to see the slightest hesitation in her father, she would immediately run to him, saying, ‘Oh father, do not be distressed; my mother has indeed passed away. If they were to strike you, I would not be left an orphan; the nation will look after me. Come on, my dear father,’ and in this way she encourages him; and if anyone were to falter even slightly, Nezahat Hanım would certainly seize hold of them. This child is certainly in need of recognition. If we award the first Independence Medal to this child, we shall demonstrate great gratitude. Let me introduce him: all our soldiers have given him the name **‘Turkish Gendarme**’.

Mr Hamdi Namık (İzmit) — Sir, I too know Khalid Bey and his daughter, as mentioned by our brother Emin Bey. It is indeed true. He could be considered the Turkish equivalent of Jan Barklı. However, I must say that, in order not to liken the independence medals we hold in such high esteem to Greek medals, I do not consider it appropriate to award them to a child of twelve years of age. If you agree, let us, on behalf of the Grand National Assembly, present a gift that will provide for this girl’s dowry when she comes of age.

(Voices of agreement)

Tunalı Hilmi Bey (Bolu) — Sir, for the first time in Ottoman history, I wish to see a pasha’s wife. To her, Mir-Miran

rank. Not just an engagement ring, but a rank as well.

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We have reproduced above the section taken verbatim from the minutes of the Grand National Assembly. The speakers never exaggerated; indeed, they may even have understated the facts. I have heard of this lady's legendary heroism from her own comrades-in-arms, with wonder and admiration. People of good will brought the matter as far as the Grand National Assembly, but unfortunately, no concrete result has emerged to this day. Nor will it… That door has been closed for fifty years…

Years have passed. I also happened to come across the reply from the Ministry of National Defence regarding a previous application. I quote it verbatim:

30 September 1964
Ministry of National Defence, Undersecretariat,
Ankara

Mrs Nezahat Baysel Mühürdar Street No. 56
Kadıköy - Istanbul

Addressed to the Presidency of the Grand National Assembly and
Your application dated 25 January 1963 requesting the granting of a pension under the national service scheme was referred to our Ministry on 8 September 1964 following your follow-up application dated 1 September 1964,

A pension under this scheme is granted by a special law to those whose superior and exceptional service, as evidenced by documents and war records, is established in comparison with their peers.

However, even if a person meets these conditions, a pension **cannot be granted if their financial circumstances are sound.**

Our Ministry has submitted to the First Grand National Assembly

and has been accepted by the honourable members of this esteemed assembly as a recognition of your services.

I kindly request your patience regarding the time required to complete the necessary procedures and conduct the investigation, and I offer my respects.

Niyazi Bengisu,
Lieutenant General
Deputy Undersecretary of the Ministry

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There you have it!... No claim for rights goes unanswered here... Matters are debated in parliament; everything from the rank of pasha to the Independence Medal is offered—and by the people's representatives, no less... Applause is free; it is bestowed in abundance... Couldn't Ismet Bey, who has played a dominant role in the nation's destiny for half a century, have intervened in such matters? 'Intervened' is an understatement! If they could, these men would wipe out all the true heroes in an instant and remain unrivalled...

In 1938, our ambassador
, hosted me for a few days and showed me around the city. One thing caught my attention: what an abundance of statues, and what artistic statues they were... They adorned the city; I asked:

— Sir, how many heroes has Romania produced?

The answer I received is most worthy of attention and reflection:

— Sir, whilst every service and sacrifice made for the sake of the homeland is immortalised in the form of such statues, may the younger generations draw courage and strength from this, and believe that the services they render to their country will not be forgotten...

What a concise, what a meaningful answer. I have only brought a couple of examples to life in this book. If I were to say to Turkish youth: 'Come, let you too put forward a few names,' it would be impossible. Because nothing has been taught to them.

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Now I shall present a truly instructive example here. I am a man who has felt this pain deep within myself; I am writing this in the hope that recording it may serve as a lesson:

The darkest days of the Armistice. 16 March 1920. Istanbul had been effectively occupied, and the young boys sleeping peacefully at the Şehzadebaşı barracks had been cowardly murdered. This incident made us the object of admiration for those scoundrels

It revealed the true nature of that Western civilisation—which the great man Mehmed Akif described as ‘a civilised monster with but a single tooth’—and what was to come of it. Despondent yet resolute, we stand at the Kadıköy pier with the aforementioned hero, Atıf Bey. On the day of the occupation of Istanbul, they raided my home in Çamlıca but could not find me; they had beaten my innocent mother with sticks. I was in Kadıköy at the home of Dr Rifât Bey with the famous Kel Ali Bey. They captured him and exiled him to Malta. I managed to extricate myself from this situation and set off to search for a friend’s house in the side streets. As I passed along Pazar Street, the Jewish owner of the number 36 furniture shop hurried off to inform the British police at the station across the road. I turned onto Moda Street and entered the street on the right. I climbed the stairs through the open door of a house with six cafés. Two young girls greeted me:

—- Whose house is this?

—- It belongs to Suphi Bey, the President of the Sultanahmet Magistrates’ Court.

—. The British are following me; I’d like to stay here for a while.

They gladly accepted, treated me to hospitality; Suphi Bey also had a son of about twelve years old (1). They asked me what sort of people the Jews were

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In a press case brought by the Jews in 1935, the second

and how they had spied for the enemy who had occupied our beloved homeland, and how they had committed treason en masse behind the lines on the Palestine front during the Great War, and that this was why they had become my enemies I explained. I

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We were now determined to go to the national front and were in this frame of mind. At the Kadıköy pier, we came across a man we had met on the Jordan front. We exchanged greetings (2). Atıf Bey:

— 'We're going to Ankara. Come along with us,' he said.

The reply we received is most noteworthy. I am passing this on to the younger generations as a cautionary tale:

— My dear Atıf Bey. I have bought my winter firewood and coal; we are comfortable enough, for better or worse... I cannot, to be honest, leave all these known matters behind and rush into the unknown... Besides, I have no money to go to Anatolia...

He served as the public prosecutor at the First Instance Criminal Court. He was, as it were, a just witness sent by God.

(2) I had written about this incident in full detail, naming the person in question, whilst he was still alive. Since he has passed away, I shall not mention his name. I am merely recording the event as a lesson.

Mr Atıf — I've sold my horses. I can give you three hundred lira.

— With three hundred lira, I can only go as far as Kadıköy .

I butted in, sir I can give three hundred lira as well . We'll go to Anatolia. The homeland won't leave us to starve; if it survives, we'll survive too. If it goes down, we'll go down with it.

The reply we received was short and to the point:

— That's all well and good! Take my regards to Mustafa Kemal...

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Time passed. Ali Fuad Pasha (Cebesoy) and Atıf Bey had secured their first victory, overcoming the nation's ill fortune at the Geyve Pass.

I had established my headquarters at Çaycuma against the French forces occupying Zonguldak. The entire regions of Bartın, Devrek, Zonguldak and Safranbolu were adrift in anarchy. Lawlessness had reached such a degree that no one could leave their home, nor could anyone refuse to pay the demanded tribute.

I put a definitive end to lawlessness and disorder. I halted the French advance. I helped to quell the Bolu uprisings. I established a large, powerful, national force—a well-trained and disciplined army.

I went to Ankara for a while. The individual mentioned above, who described the national movement as ' ' and 'Edebiyat' , was quite

important position. I went to visit him in a state of astonishment and bewilderment. He welcomed me enthusiastically and, to prevent me from being subjected to any unpleasant treatment, addressed his entourage with these words:

— Here is the true hero, friends, to whom I sent the first news to Mustafa Kemal. I know him from the Sinai front; he is a man to be proud of...

The multitude of questions and doubts that had been building up in my mind froze in place. I did not press further and said nothing.

My dear fellow citizens who are reading this book; by the time you reach us, morning will have come. In this most critical and perilous era of our history, countless true heroes and great, distinguished commanders were eliminated one by one for the sake of a certain Mr Ismet, and in the end, only Ismet remained. In what history of the world can you find such an event?

This much is certain: Allah, the Almighty, who regards jihad as the highest of obligations, will surely reward those true mujahideen who sacrificed their lives in these wars of liberation, out of reverence for the glorious name of ALLAH on our minarets, with His Paradise and His divine countenance. Indeed, shortly before the great and final offensive, in İzmit, in the presence of Claude Ferrer, the Minister of Public Works Merzifonlu Ömer Lûtfi Bey and a few Members of Parliament, I gave the following reply to Mustafa Kemal Pasha:

— Your Excellency, our services are not in exchange for

. We await our reward from Allah and from history...

We are Muslims who give thanks, and give thanks again. Allah is the Absolute Just. Let some greedy souls have stolen the spiritual legacy of our martyrs and veterans; Allah will hold them to account. And history... sooner or later, will reveal the full truth behind all events. Let this work be a beginning.

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